

FINAL 2/13/22

<https://spas-elca.org/gleaning-from-the-harvest-ministry-grants/>

Harvest Ministry Grant

Racial Justice

SECTION 1

Trinity Lutheran Church – Racial Justice Ministry Team

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SECTION 2 - RATIONALE/PURPOSE FOR FUNDING THIS MINISTRY

- *What is the compelling vision driving this initiative?*

It is a Kairos moment for Trinity. We have celebrated 150 years of ministry and are imagining the next 150. We review the past to enlighten our future and our members have recently written our 150-year history. It is a story of compassionate action working shoulder to shoulder with partners in Haiti, Tanzania and Mexico, sponsoring families from Vietnam and Laos, feeding, clothing, and sheltering neighbors in the St. Croix Valley and beyond, sending aid to victims of natural disasters around the world, and so much more. However, we have not answered the repeated calls to love our BIPOC neighbors with the same compassionate action. We do not have a collective understanding of the history and ongoing effects of white privilege and the pervasiveness of racism. We have yet to acknowledge the wealth we gained from the displacement and theft of the land from Ojibwe and Dakota Peoples who lived in our community before European settlement. As we think about living out a story of racial justice, the questions are not what *should* we do or what *can* we do. The essential question is: *Will* we do it? If we follow the steps outlined in this Harvest Grant proposal, it is our hope that Trinity will answer: *Yes, with the help of God.*

As we prepare our sesquicentennial history for publication, we feel it is immensely important to include a prologue addressing our pre-settler history that includes confession, Indigenous land acknowledgement, and our commitments going forward. Research for the prologue has stirred many questions about our specific history, which has led to our compelling vision for this Harvest Grant.

We want to bring greater awareness in ourselves and to our community through

- education on past and present Native culture and experiences;
- stories of the Native Peoples who lived on this land long before us;
- Indigenous land acknowledgement; and
- inspiration for action and relationship-building as we go.

- *What do you intend to learn from this project/ministry?**

We have much to learn from Native Peoples:

- the unconscionable harm to them caused by the theft of land and their displacement;
- their wisdom and courage to survive and to resist; and
- their abiding faith, hope, love, and compassionate care of all Creation.

We can learn much about ourselves:

- Who are our elders -- the people, created by God, who lived in this place before us?
- Why have we not heard the repeated call to love our BIPOC neighbors?
- How will our lives and our church be transformed when we commit to this work?

SECTION 3 - OBJECTIVES FOR THIS MINISTRY

-*What are your objectives? Include: goals, context, leadership, what you intend to learn, how you intend to share what you have learned**

Our commitment is to Truth, Education, Relationship and Action (Action in the form of Reparation first, leading over time to possible Reconciliation as dictated by the needs and views of our BIPOC siblings).

When wisdom is heard, it is a powerful resource to unite people of all backgrounds and move us forward. We commit to truth-telling by

- deep listening to the voices of our Indigenous siblings;
- honest learning around our own, our church's, and our government's harmful ideology and policies toward these siblings;
- acknowledging the horrific truths of our history in order to promote healing and wholeness; and
- embracing the narrative change that occurs when all voices are listened to and acknowledged.

We commit to education that will

- help us reach a collective understanding of the history and ongoing effects of white privilege and the pervasiveness of racism in our specific community and on the Native communities that lived here before European settlement;
- require our own hard work of learning about our complicity;
- lead to building relationships and working towards justice and equity; and

- compensate Native teachers, researchers, and storytellers for their expertise and their emotional labor.

We commit to building relationships with the Indigenous community by

- living the mission that we proclaim -- to love our neighbor — including those who do not look like us (a mostly White congregation);
- continuing to celebrate the gifts of diverse voices in our worship and compensating fairly for these gifts;
- continuing to use inclusive language in worship and inviting continued progress in showing respect and honor;
- continuing to share and partner with people and organizations doing the work of racial justice; and
- striving for a more equitable church and society that grows out of love, not guilt.

We commit to action that leads to reparation first and hopefully over time, to reconciliation. We will

- look to the wisdom and guidance of our Indigenous neighbors in carrying out meaningful reparations;
- advocate for the rights of Indigenous people through organized and effective change to structures, laws and policies;
- continue our work in land acknowledgement that recognizes the Indigenous people as the past, present and future caretakers of this land;
- transcend the paralysis of guilt and shame with engagement, accountability and responsibility; and
- follow God's work of reconciliation in the world, seeking justice for all people and celebrating our diversity within Christ's unifying love.

SECTION 4 - STRATEGY FOR THIS MINISTRY

*- How do you intend to reach your objectives?**

Our strategy for this Harvest Grant is multi-dimensional.

Education Series – We plan to hire Vance Blackfox (Cherokee), Desk Director for American Indian Alaskan Native Tribal Nations, ELCA, and Director of Other+Wise, to teach a 3-part education series using the curriculum he has developed: Indian 101; Movements in Indian Country; Indigenous Thought and Theology. Classes will be offered at Trinity and open to the whole community. Young people will be included in this series.

Native Stories – We plan to invite members of the Dakota and Ojibwe nations to tell their stories, seeking to learn the truth of the history of the land of Trinity and Stillwater (pre-colonization by Europeans). We will compensate fairly for their time and their emotional labor.

We will reach out to Tinta Wita (Prairie Island Indian Community) and to the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux (Dakota) Community, and others. We may also seek resources from the Minnesota Historical Society, the Minnesota History Center, and others. Stories will be told at in-person events. Video may also be an option or other methods preferred by the Dakota and Ojibwe persons with whom we work.

Visual & Online Permanent Exhibit *Learn Who Lived Here First* (name subject to change)

We will share our learnings with the local community and ideally through the Washington County Historical Society by creating a pre-European settlement display and publishing information on its website. Other likely venues and platforms include Trinity Lutheran Church, local newspapers, Stillwater City Council, Greater Stillwater Chamber of Commerce, Discover Stillwater website, Stillwater Public Library, and more. We will invite Indigenous Peoples to tell their stories in these exhibits and let them determine the final output.

*- Who will you learn with in this initiative (partners)?**

We will partner with the ELCA and specifically Saint Paul Area Synod, and specifically Reverend Joann Conroy (Oglala), President of the American Indian/Alaska Native Lutheran Association; Minnesota Council of Churches and specifically, Reverend Jim Bear Jacobs (Mohawk); sovereign tribal nations in Minnesota; Washington County Historical Society; St. Croix Valley community organizations and members; and others.

SECTION 5 – EVALUATION PROCESS

*- How will you know you have reached your goals?**

We will know we have reached our goals when there is

- positive evaluation of Harvest Grant activities;
- increased participation in the work of Racial Justice;
- expanded awareness in ourselves and our community through self-evaluation; and
- a united effort to move forward, ready to take more steps toward racial justice, in a manner consistent with the preferences of our BIPOC siblings.

Specifically, we will prepare a report that summarizes results of our three-fold strategy, including the numbers of Trinity and community members who attend the educational series and their responses; the nature and impact of the story-telling; and the impact and response of the visual and online exhibits. A copy of the report will be provided to the Saint Paul Area Synod office.

*What is your timeline?**

We plan to offer the education series in fall 2022. Storytelling events and permanent display will follow into 2023. The ongoing work of racial justice is lifelong.

SECTION 6 - PROJECTED BUDGET

*- What is your projected budget for the project?**

Our proposed budget is \$15,000 with the following rough breakdown

- \$5K Vance Blackfox for compensation for teaching and travel expenses
- \$5K compensation to the two Native nations we hope to work with for research on the history of this specific land and story-telling
- \$2K promotion of these community-wide efforts with mailings, outdoor signage, and more
- \$3K development of online and visual display and related efforts to educate all of us about land use pre-European settlement, consistent with the direction of the Native nations with whom we work.

We will shift funds from the promotion budget if more is needed to fairly compensate the people from whom we seek help. Trinity will provide in-kind resources including meeting space, project management, and other volunteer labor by members and staff.

In closing, we are grateful to God for your work on The Road Toward Racial Justice and for offering this Harvest Grant to encourage our partnership. We are excited to see where God takes this and how it might shift our shared faithful vision.

Racial Justice Ministry Team
Trinity Lutheran Church Stillwater